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ABSTRACT

Peer coaching, in which two teachers observe each other's classes with the objective of helping each other improve their instructional abilities, empowers teaching professionals by enabling them to develop their own criteria for evaluation of and responsibility for quality classroom performance. Peer coaching can involve collaborative, expert, or mirroring activities. Effects of coaching on the transfer of training include: more frequent practice of new strategies, more appropriate use of new strategies, long-term retention of knowledge of coached strategies, and clearer understanding of the new strategies. A study of seven practicum students examined the effectiveness of peer coaching in increasing specific teaching behaviors in a self-contained school for students with severe/profound intellectual disabilities, and assessed the viability of peer coaching as a supplement to university supervision in distant field placements. In general, participants reported that peer coaching made a valuable contribution to their field experience. Attachments to the paper include steps in peer coaching, a peer coaching evaluation sheet, a questionnaire assessing teachers' perceptions about being coached, and a data collection sheet. (JDD)

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ED 371 496

PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION: EMPOWERING SCHOOL PERSONNEL THROUGH PEER COACHING

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Peer coaching can be used to enhance instruction for a variety of teaching professionals including teachers, student teachers, and paraprofessionals There is a growing body of literature which espouses the benefits of peer coaching. Teacher coaching originated as a staff development technique designed to enhance effective teaching behavior (McREL Staff, 1985-85; Showers, 1985). In the narrowest sense, peer coaching refers to two teachers observing each other's classes with the objective of helping each other improve their instructional abilities. Most of the research that has been conducted involves teaching professionals at different levels of skill development. Peer coaching empowers teaching professionals by enabling them to develop their own criteria for evaluation of and responsibility for quality classroom performance, rather than have this process performed by others beyond the teaching site.

Teachers are not only participants in "collaborative" peer coaching but can also serve in a variety of other roles in the peer coaching process. In "collaborative" peer coaching, professionals work together to define target teaching skills for observation and feedback. In addition, they may work as partners with students and paraprofessionals in "expert" or "mirroring" coaching activities. In "expert" coaching, a stronger, more experienced partner serves as a feedback observer for teacher-defined target behaviors. In "mirroring" coaching, the teacher, or partner, serves simply as a data collector, providing feedback only in the form of raw data.

Also, they may serve as facilitator in arranging collaborative peer coaching opportunities for these same groups. Finally, the teacher may assume a role as observer in a classroom where students or paraprofessionals are conducting independent coaching activities.

PURPOSES OF COACHING

1. To build communities of teachers who continually engage in the study of their craft.

   ... an interactive, reciprocal relationship among professionals

2. To develop the shared language and set of common understandings necessary for the collegial study of new knowledge and skills

   ... curriculum and instruction need constant improvement

   ... expanding our repertoire of skills is hard work

3. To provide a structure for the follow up to training that is essential for acquiring new teaching skills and strategies

   ... the transfer of skills and strategies requires more substantial training than we typically allot

   Showers (1985)

EFFECTS OF COACHING ON THE TRANSFER OF TRAINING

1. Coached teachers generally practice new strategies more frequently and develop greater skill in the actual moves of a new teaching strategy than uncoached teachers (Showers, 1985).

2. Coached teachers use new strategies more appropriately in terms of their own instructional objectives and theories of specific models of teaching Showers, 1982; 1984).

3. Coached teachers exhibit long-term retention of knowledge about and skill with strategies in which they have been coached. As a group they increase in the appropriate use of new teaching models over time (Baker, 1983).

4. Coached teachers are much more likely to teach new strategies to their students, ensuring that the students understand the purpose of the strategy and the behaviors expected of them when using the strategy (Showers, 1984).

5. Coached teachers exhibit a clearer understanding regarding the purposes and uses of the new strategies as revealed through
   - *interviews
   - *lesson plans
   - *classroom performance

   (Showers, 1982; 1984)

(Adapted from: Showers, B. (1985). Teachers coaching teachers. Educational Leadership, 42, 43-48).

THE PROCESS OF COACHING

Study the rationale of the new skills.

See these skills demonstrated.

Practice them.

Learn to provide feedback to your coaching partner as you experiment with the skills.

Feedback must be accurate, specific, and nonevaluative.

Showers (1985)

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PURPOSE:

To examine the effectiveness of peer coaching in increasing specific teaching behaviors of special education practicum students and to assess the viability of peer coaching as a supplement to university supervision in distant field placements.

SETTING:

Self-contained school for students with severe/profound intellectual disabilities approximately 55 miles from university campus.

SUBJECTS:

Seven of 11 practicum students participated as experimental subjects. The four nonparticipants were not able to be included due to logistical difficulties. The 7 students composed 3 dyads plus one student whose partner could not be included due to excessive absence.

MEASUREMENT:

Dependent measures included continuous data collection, attentional cue and descriptive feedback. These responses were measured during instructional sessions ranging from 15 to 30 minutes. Number of target behaviors per number of task trials was converted to percentage data.

DESIGN:

Multiple baseline across behaviors with three dyads.

PROCEDURES:

- Seminar training - characteristics, purposes, and functions of peer coaching including simulation activities.
- Periodic seminars targeting specific teaching behaviors.
- Peer coaching cycles implemented in the field environment.
    - self-determined schedule by each dyad
    - minimum of once per phase
    - objective feedback only
    - no suggestions for performance improvement
- Peer coaching plus feedback - supervisor provided graphic feedback of target behavior performance of peer to each coaching partner.

CONSUMER SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE:

Fifteen Likert scale items used to gather opinions regarding satisfaction on peer coaching. In general, participants reported that peer coaching made a valuable contribution to their field experience and recommended that this technique be used in future field placements.

RELIABILITY:

Point by point reliability was calculated for at least 25% of sessions across phases. Mean percentage agreement:

Baseline	$\overline{X}$ = 91% (75% - 100%)
Data collection	$\overline{X}$ = 98.9% (87% - 100%)
Attentional cue	$\overline{X}$ = 96.3% (86% - 100%)
Descriptive feedback	$\overline{X}$ = 99.1% (93% - 100%)

RESULTS:

Peer coaching appears to be a promising practice for teacher education programs. Results of this study were mixed probably due to time constraints and confounding variables inherent in the field based setting.

STEPS IN PEER COACHING

1. Set appointment
2. Review target behavior definitions
3. Observe partner
4. Take data on target behaviors
5. Share data with partner
   - Be accurate
   - Be specific
   - Be non-judgmental
6. Ask for partner's reaction to data
7. Together brainstorm ideas for performance improvement
8. Write log entry & evaluation sheet
9. Set next appointment

EVALUATION SHEET

Date of Peer Coaching_____

Partner_____

I was _____ the coach _____ the teacher

1. Did you remember to check off the Peer coaching checklist?

2. How do you feel this coaching session went?

3. Do you feel that this session feedback made a difference in your teaching?

4. Do you feel that your partner was receptive to your feedback?

Name_____ Date_____

Instructions: Circle the number that most closely reflects your perception of being coached.

1. = strongly agree
2. = agree
3. = disagree
4. = strongly disagree

1.	I liked working with my coach	1	2	3	4
2.	I had a poor coaching experience	1	2	3	4
3.	Coaching was beneficial to my skill development	1	2	3	4
4.	I was not provided necessary emotional support	1	2	3	4
5.	Coaching provided me with companionship while learning a new skill	1	2	3	4
6.	I had difficulty communicating with my coach	1	2	3	4
7.	I would have had a better experience with a different coach	1	2	3	4
8.	My coach gave me technical feedback	1	2	3	4
9.	My coach provided me with helpful suggestions for improvement	1	2	3	4
10.	I feel comfortable about the feedback I received from my coach	1	2	3	4
11.	I could have learned just as much without having a coach	1	2	3	4
12.	I disliked being coached	1	2	3	4

DATA COLLECTION SHEET

GROUP #_____ DATE_____ TIME: BEGIN_____ END_____

COACH_____ PARTNER_____

OBSERVER_____

GROUPING: LARGE GROUP____ SMALL GROUP___ INDIVIDUAL_____

SETTING: CLASSROOM: REGULAR_____
VOCATIONAL_____
CVAE_____
RVI_____

HERE'S WHAT TO LOOK FOR: 1)ATTENTION CUE; 2) SPECIFIC FEEDBACK; AND 3) REDIRECTION

HERE'S WHAT TO DO: MAKE A MARK IN THE BOX NEXT TO EACH BEHAVIOR EACH TIME YOU SEE YOUR PARTNER DO THIS DURING YOUR 15 MINUTE OBSERVATION TIME. SINCE YOU ARE ONLY OBSERVING FOR 15 MINUTES - PAY CLOSE ATTENTION. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU GET A VERY ACCURATE COUNT!

ATTENTIONAL CUE

DEFINITION: GETTING THE STUDENTS ATTENTION BEFORE BEGINNING INSTRUCTION

FEEDBACK

DEFINITION: GIVING POSITIVE ENTHUSIASTIC FEEDBACK ON THE STUDENTS PERFORMANCE

REDIRECT

DEFINITION: BY WORD OR GESTURE GET OFF TASK STUDENT BACK TO WORK

TARGET BEHAVIOR

ATTENTION CUE

THE PERSON CALLS THE STUDENT'S NAME, ESTABLISHES EYE CONTACT, TAPS THE STUDENT ON THE SHOULDER, OR TOUCHES THE STUDENT IN AN AGE APPROPRIATE MANNER BEFORE BEGINNING INSTRUCTION OR SPEAKING TO THE PERSON IN ORDER TO BE SURE THAT THE STUDENT IS LISTENING FIRST.

INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR EXAMPLES

THE PERSON BEGINS INSTRUCTION OR ISSUES A COMMAND WITHOUT GAINING THE ATTENTION OF THE STUDENT FIRST.

DESCRIPTIVE FEEDBACK

THE PERSON PROVIDES POSITIVE, ENTHUSIASTIC FEEDBACK ON THE CORRECTNESS OR A RESPONSE IN AN WAY THAT DESCRIBES EXACTLY WHAT BEHAVIORS ARE INTENDED TO BE REINFORCED (FOR EXAMPLE I LIKE THE WAY YOU GOT RIGHT TO WORK!)

INEFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

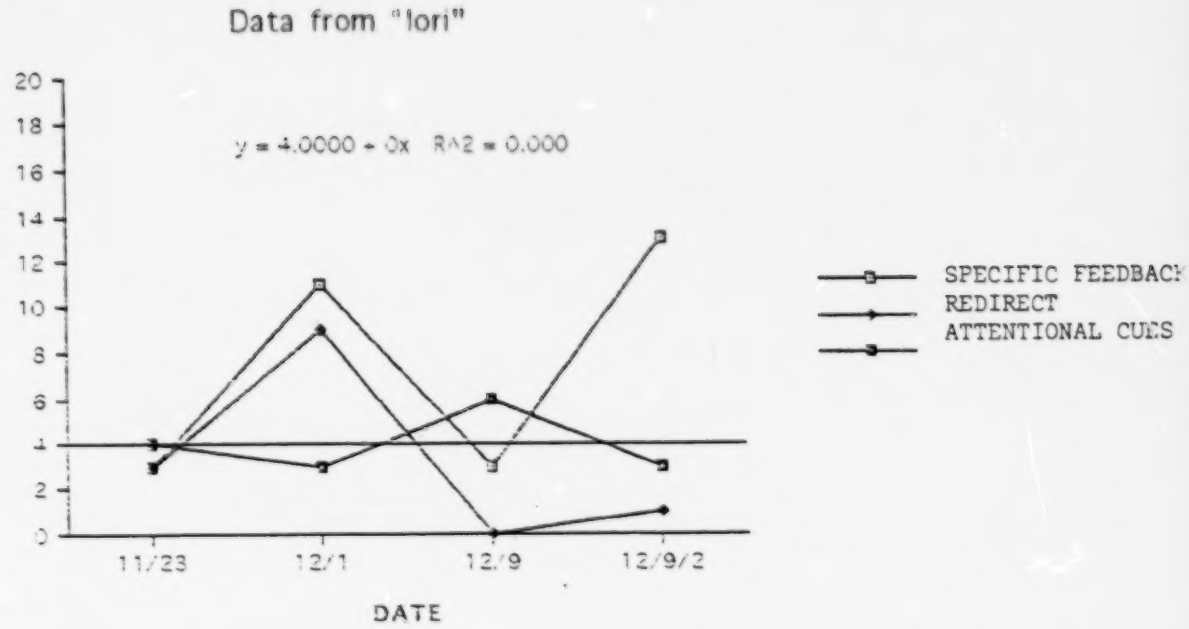
THE PERSON PROVIDES POSITIVE, ENTHUSIASTIC FEEDBACK ON THE CORRECTNESS OF A RESPONSE IN A WAY THAT IS NONSPECIFIC AND LEAVES THE STUDENT TO DECIDE PRECISELY WHAT HE DID THAT WAS RIGHT (FOR EXAMPLE: THAT'S GREAT, GOOD WORK, GOOD JOB).

REDIRECTING OFF TASK BEHAVIOR

THE PERSON BY WORD OR GESTURE CALLS THE STUDENT'S ATTENTION BACK TO THE TASK WHEN HE/SHE IS NOT PAYIN' ATTENTION OR WORKING AS DIRECTED.

INEFFECTIVE REDIRECTING

THE PERSON DOES NOT RECOGNIZE THAT A STUDENT IS NOT PAYING ATTENTION OR FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS AND DOES NOT INTERVENE OR TAKE ACTION.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SPECIFIC FEEDBACK
REDIRECT
ATTENTIONAL CUES